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A report on the use of color-coded cards to teach slow learners beginning Spanish is presented here. Each card packet taught a specific concept and allowed for individualized pacing and self-testing. Achievement tests were administered at specific intervals to assess student progress. The report indicates that there was a significant increase in the number of passing grades among students in this individualized program. Recommendations are that the maximum size of a low ability class be twenty students, that color-coded cards continue to be used with the low-ability group, and that color cards also be developed for more advanced language students. A sample achievement test is appended to the report. (AF)

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I. THE PROBLEM

This year a decision was made to track students in first year French and Spanish classes. At the end of the first marking period these students were tested and placed into a one, two, or three ability group. The groups were identified as follows:

Group 1 - Show good language learning ability

Group 2 - Show average language learning ability

Group 3 - Show less-than-average language learning ability

Thirty-two students classified as Group 3 were assigned to the writer, and their grade distribution was:

C - 11, D - 19, F - 2

After working with these students for two weeks, the writer decided to investigate the possibility of using colored cards to help them recognize various concepts. The color card method was so enthusiastically received, that it was difficult to produce enough color packets. A decision was made to provide released time under Title III. At this point the program was developed to include spelling, grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure using the student text, La Familia Fernández, as a guide.

II. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The program consisted of a series of packets containing color coded cards. Each packet taught a specific concept. Every student began with packet number one and proceeded at his own pace.

Student procedure with the color coded cards

Phase #1 The student worked by himself at his own pace to learn the concept developed in that particular packet by matching colors to help him locate the correct responses.

Phase #2 When the student felt that he had learned the concept, he took the self-test that was contained in the packet. If he had less than two mistakes, he gave the test to the teacher and proceeded to work with the next packet. If he had more than two mistakes, he was required to review the materials.

Phase #3 After the student had mastered a specific number of packets, he was retested, and special attention was given to his oral and written achievement. These scores determined his marking period grade.

Test scores were charted for a daily check on student progress and achievement. In addition to the packet self-tests, the student also took four written tests and one oral test. (See appendix for a sample written test.)

Since a special grading system had to be devised, letter grades were assigned to the completion of a specific number of packets each marking period. The number of packets required depended upon the degree of difficulty presented by the lessons.

III PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Two types of data were collected and analyzed. One type of data, kept in the teacher's grade book as a simple grid chart, was the daily record of each student's test scores. This information was made available to any student wishing to compare his achievement with that of other members of his class.

The other type of data was in the form of a graph showing the progress of each student through the various instructional packets during the three marking periods in which the packets were used. (See figure, Page

That the use of the color coded cards for the slower learner might have been effective in reducing the number of "F's", seems to be substantiated somewhat by the Interim Report on a Continuous Progress Program in Spanish 1 and French 1 by Dr. Glatthorn, Dr. Ferderbar, and Alan Quay. This report related that the per cent of "D's" and "F's" after regrouping showed an average decrease of approximately 21 per cent. In Spanish 1 (the report also shows) the per cent of failures the second marking period was only one-ninth that of the same marking period the previous year, when the classes were ungrouped and without packets. For the third marking period, the per cent of "F's" in Spanish 1 still remained approximately one-third that of the 1966-67 Spanish 1 classes.

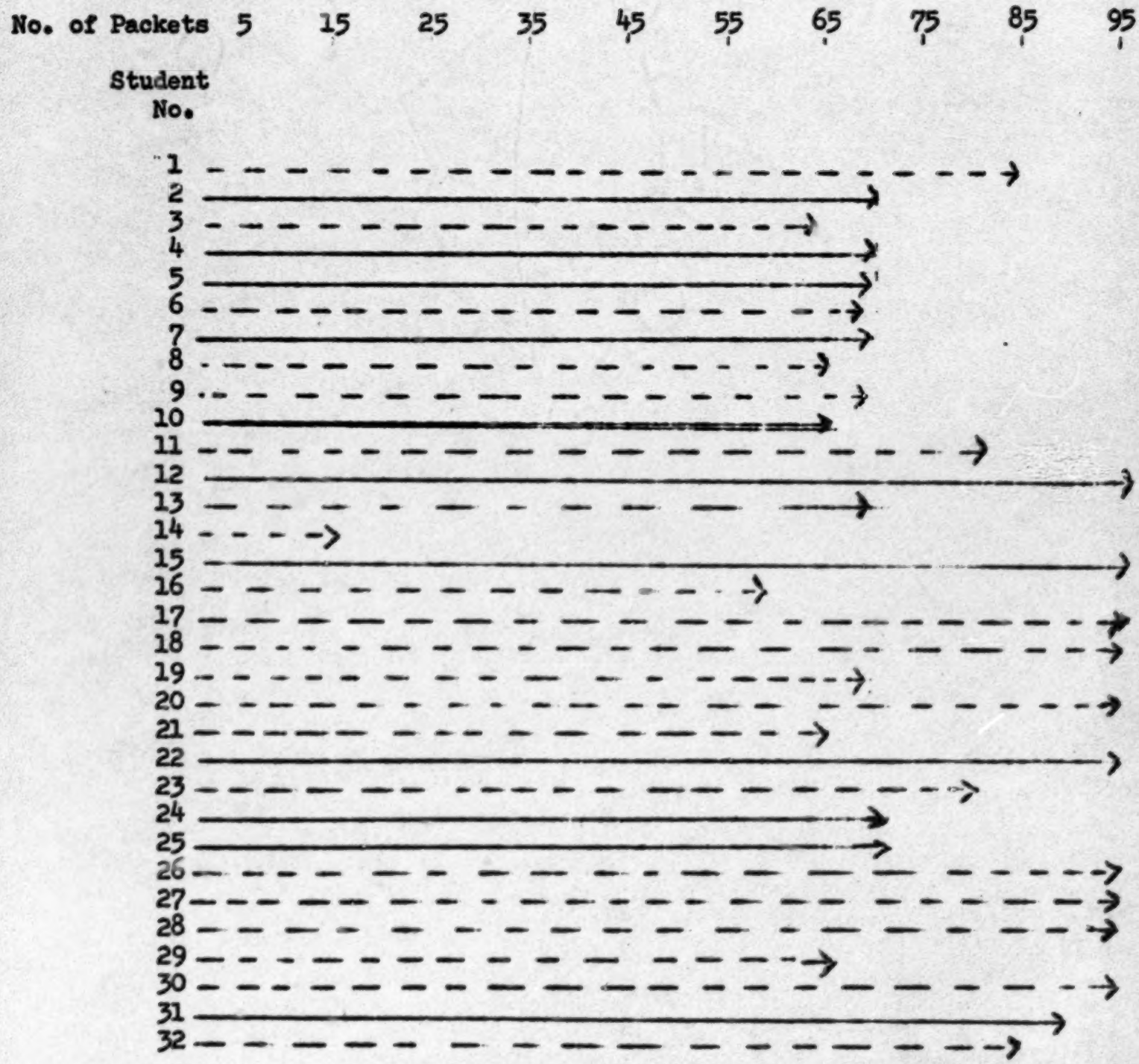
Figure 1

GRAPH SHOWING THE RELATIVE PROGRESS, OF EACH NINTH AND TENTH GRADE STUDENT IN THE CLASS, THROUGH THE PACKET LESSONS

Key

9th grade student (represented by dotted line)

10th grade student (represented by solid line)



As indicated in figure No. 1, three of eleven tenth grade students and seven of twenty-one ninth grade students finished 95 packets. That is almost one third of the students finished all of the packets (95) and received, with the help of their test marks, a grade of C. One-half of the students, many of whom had been receiving F's before regrouping, managed to earn D's. The remaining one-sixth of the students received F's. Some of these F students covered as many as 70 packets but neglected to learn the concepts as thoroughly as was necessary.

IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Of the thirty-two students in the third and fourth marking periods, there were fifteen who showed a definite interest in and willingness to work with their materials. Of these, six have the necessary language background to continue next year in a 11_3 ability group. The other nine worked diligently but unfortunately had difficulty retaining more than two or three concepts, thus despite their efforts, their grades continued to remain low.

Seven students were repeaters who were taking Spanish for the second or third consecutive year because of parental pressure.

Two definite advantages were evident:

Each student was able to proceed at his own pace and at the same time realized that he was accomplishing something.

The students did not have to be constantly supervised, and this permitted the teacher to help individual students with their questions and oral work.

Two disadvantages were:

Some of the sets became torn, disorganized or lost when the students did not exercise proper care.

The more industrious student was apt to take the packets from the classroom and eventually the sets were lost.

Conclusions

The difficulties encountered with this particular class were:

There were too many repeaters in one class. The class of thirty-two (twenty-seven boys and five girls) was definitely too large. A class of twenty students would possibly have been more advantageous.

Though two students would have preferred not to move up and leave their friends, there was little parental or teacher objection. The continuous progress program seems to have been somewhat successful since there was a 21% average drop in the number of failures.

Recommendations

The writer strongly recommends that future classes of slow learners or underachievers such as the students described in this study be held to a maximum of 20 students.

The writer also strongly recommends that the color card system be used for the slow learner who has a definite interest in learning a foreign language.

Further development of these cards should be made to include material for the second and third year student. These cards or packets could then be used in a language clinic as a means of review as well as a means of reinforcement for many other language students.

Some provision should be made for the slower learners to continue with this type of instruction during the summer months and thus enable him to continue his language program in September, at the proper level.

Other media should be examined for use as possible aid to students presently repeating the language.

APPENDIX - A

SAMPLE ACHIEVEMENT TEST

ME LLAMO_____

Below are a list of Spanish nouns. Decide whether the noun is masculine, feminine, singular or plural. Place the LETTER of your answer in the space provided at the left of the noun. EL, LOS, LA, LAS

A B C D

_____1. día
_____2. papá
_____3. hermanas
_____4. casa
_____5. muchachos
_____6. vista
_____7. hombre
_____8. cajas
_____9. agua
_____10. arroyo
_____11. canicas
_____12. zapato
_____13. escaparates
_____14. hambre
_____15. duraznos
_____16. médico
_____17. huesos
_____18. perro
_____19. gusto
_____20. amigas
_____21. años
_____22. universidad
_____23. señores
_____24. razón
_____25. dulces
_____26. fuente
_____27. dedos
_____28. estudiante
_____29. vestidos
_____30. paseo
_____31. sandwiches
_____32. fruta
_____33. vasos
_____34. ranas
_____35. mañana
_____36. padres
_____37. parque
_____38. escuela
_____39. días
_____40. tardes
_____41. sombrero
_____42. lunes
_____43. leche
_____44. naranjas
_____45. estómago
_____46. sed

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED RETURN THE PAPER.

ME LLAMO_____

I. Rewrite the following sentences in the negative.

1. Pepito es un médico._____

2. Él y yo estamos bien._____

3. Ella se llama María._____

4. Yo tengo mucha hambre._____

5. Juan y María viven aquí._____

II. Write the following in the plural.

1. la universidad bonita _____

2. el señor grande_____

3. Su niño gordo _____

4. nuestra escuela roja_____

5. mi vestido azul_____

III. Write the following in Spanish.

1. Who_____ 2. Whom _____

3. How _____ 4. What _____

5. When _____ 6. Where_____

7. Why_____

IV. Write the following numbers in Spanish.

7 _____ 13 _____

15_____ 6 _____

4_____ 9 _____

14_____ 12 _____

V. Complete the following sentences.

1. Pepito, Emilio y Amelia son _____.

2. Pepito _____ cinco anos.

3. Yo _____gordo.

4. Nosotros _____sed.

5. Yo _____en la escuela.

ME LLAMO _____

Conjugate the following verbs. When you are finished return the paper to me.

ESTAR

yo _____

Tú _____

él _____

nosotros _____

ellos _____

IR

yo _____

tú _____

ella _____

él y yo _____

usteded _____

QUERER

Yo _____

tú _____

usted _____

nosotros _____

él y ella _____

SER

YO _____

tú _____

él _____

nosotros _____

ellos _____

llamarse

yo _____

tú _____

él _____

nosotros _____

ellos _____

VIVIR

yo _____

tú _____

ella _____

Juan y yo _____

Juan y María _____

BUSCAR

yo _____

tú _____

Juan _____

María y yo _____

Los niños _____

TRAER

Yo _____

tú _____

ella _____

Nosotros _____

Los perros _____

SABER

yo _____

tú _____

Pepito _____

El y yo _____

el y ella _____

TENER

Yo _____

tú _____

Elena _____

Carlos y yo _____

Juan y María _____

PONER

Yo _____

tú _____

El perro _____

Nosotros _____

Ustedes _____

DAR

Yo _____

tú _____

usted _____

él y yo _____

ellos _____

ME LLAMO_____

I. What do the following mean?

el _____	está _____
él _____	esta _____
por qué _____	hombre _____
porque _____	hambre _____
mi _____	nuestro _____
me _____	nosotros _____
pero _____	bueno _____
perro _____	bien _____

II. Below is a composition. Write it in Spanish.

My name is _____. I live with my mother, father and three sisters. We live in a pretty house. The house is white. I have a cat named John. He is fat.

My sisters names are Joan, Betty and Mary. They are pretty. Joan is twelve years old, Betty is 15 and Mary is seven years old. I am 10 years old. We go to the red school on High Street. In school I write with a blue pen and I speak Spanish in Spanish class.

When I am hungry I eat sandwiches and when I am thirsty I drink milk. Joan likes fruit. She eats peaches, oranges and bananas.